

Lithuania Offers Plan For Talks

Cabinet Urges Freeze On Independence

By Carey Goldberg
Associated Press

MOSCOW, June 16—The Lithuanian government urged the legislature of the breakaway Baltic republic today to compromise with the Kremlin by temporarily suspending implementation of its declaration of independence.

The proposal by the Council of Ministers, Lithuania's cabinet, appeared to comply with a compromise formula offered Tuesday by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. The Soviet news agency Tass said the proposal "could mark the beginning of the solution of all the so-called 'Lithuanian problems.' "

The Lithuanian government recommended that the March 11 declaration of independence be retained but that its implementation be frozen while negotiations are underway with Moscow. "Our act of independence would remain valid," said council spokesman Gentaras Jatkonis. "But we are postponing the realization of it."

Meanwhile, officials said, Soviet authorities began pumping natural gas to a fertilizer plant in Lithuania, partly easing a two-month-old blockade that had been imposed in an attempt to persuade the republic to renounce its independence declaration.

Restoration of the gas supply fulfilled a promise made to Lithuanian Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene on Wednesday by Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov that 15 percent of the republic's daily natural gas supply would be restored.

Politburo member Yuri Maslyukov told a news conference in Moscow Friday that the restoration of fuel to the Lithuanian plant was a goodwill gesture from the Kremlin and a "reiteration of the Soviet government's interest in speeding negotiations."

Algis Cekuolis, a consultant for the Baltic republic, said it was un-

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clear whether the proposal to suspend the independence declaration would have enough support to be passed by the Lithuanian legislature, which will probably consider it Monday. "It will be received in parliament by very strong opposition," he said.

The Lithuanian government under Prunskiene is considered more disposed to compromise with the Kremlin than is the parliament, which is led by President Vytautas Landsbergis and dominated by members of the pro-independence Sajudis movement.

Gorbachev offered to compromise Tuesday in a meeting with the leaders of the secessionist Baltic states of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. He told the Supreme Soviet, the standing legislature, earlier that day that "if Lithuania will suspend the implementation of this act of independence, we may start to talk. That means suspend its implementation at least for the duration of the talks."

The Soviet president previously had demanded that the republics rescind their declarations of independence before he would consider formal negotiations over Baltic independence. Gorbachev's offer Tuesday, made shortly before his first joint meeting with the three republics' presidents, was seen as a key concession.

Similar proposals have gone back and forth for weeks through telegrams and informal talks between Moscow and Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, Cekuolis noted today, but "this is the first time it's on an official level."

A spokesman for the Lithuanian parliament, Aidas Palubinskas, said he was told by a pipeline dispatcher that natural gas was again flowing from the Soviet Union to the Azotas fertilizer plant in the city of Jonava. "The plant will be getting 3.5 million cubic meters daily," Palubinskas said he was told.

More than 26,000 people have lost their jobs because of the Kremlin's blockade of all oil, most natural gas and some raw materials. Palubinskas said restoration of gas supplies to the Azotas plant would mean 1,600 employees could return to work by the end of the week.